

**Los Angeles County
Waste Management Association
1851 East First Street, Suite 1220
Santa Ana, CA 92705-4052**

February 12, 2016

Hilda L. Solis, Chair
Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room 383
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**SUBJECT: LOS ANGELES COUNTY PHARMACEUTICALS AND SHARPS
COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL STEWARDSHIP ORDINANCE- SUPPORT**

Dear Supervisor Solis:

The Los Angeles County Waste Management Association (LACWMA) is an association of solid waste collection, disposal, and recycling firms operating throughout Greater Los Angeles. Our members support Los Angeles County's efforts to adopt an ordinance which would require the development of Stewardship Plans to address the collection and disposal of unwanted/unused pharmaceuticals and sharps waste generated by residents. The Ordinance is important because it establishes a sustainably financed program that will provide residents with a convenient means to safely dispose of unwanted sharps and pharmaceuticals and help to prevent them from entering the environment, reduce their availability for drug abuse and misuse, and reduce injuries associated with sharps being improperly disposed. With access to safe and convenient disposal options, as well as a robust outreach and education program residents will be more informed of the appropriate collection and disposal methods.

The ordinance is especially important to our industry, as under the *status quo* we are ultimately responsible for end-of-life disposal of used medicines and sharps. This is something that we are not equipped to do. Meds and sharps are a unique waste unlike any other; they cannot be recycled and they pose health and safety risks to our workers.

An employee stuck by a needle on a sort line will require medical testing to ensure she/he did not contract a disease from a contaminated needle. This often includes missed days from work and a 6-month waiting period for test results, in addition to increasing worker's compensation costs.

From the recycling companies' perspective, regulations require that upon the occurrence of a "stick" the entire sort line must be shut down until the needle is found.

The passage of this ordinance would ensure that manufacturers and producers of prescription and nonprescription drugs and sharps share in the responsibility of proper disposal of their products. Our members support this shared responsibility approach, and do not want the cost of managing these materials at the end of their life to be borne solely by local jurisdictions, and ultimately passed on to ratepayers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by a horizontal line.

Steve South, President

cc: County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich
Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
Angelo J. Bellomo, EPR Working Group